

SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE 1827  
DEATH OF LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



1977 SESQUICENTENNIAL OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

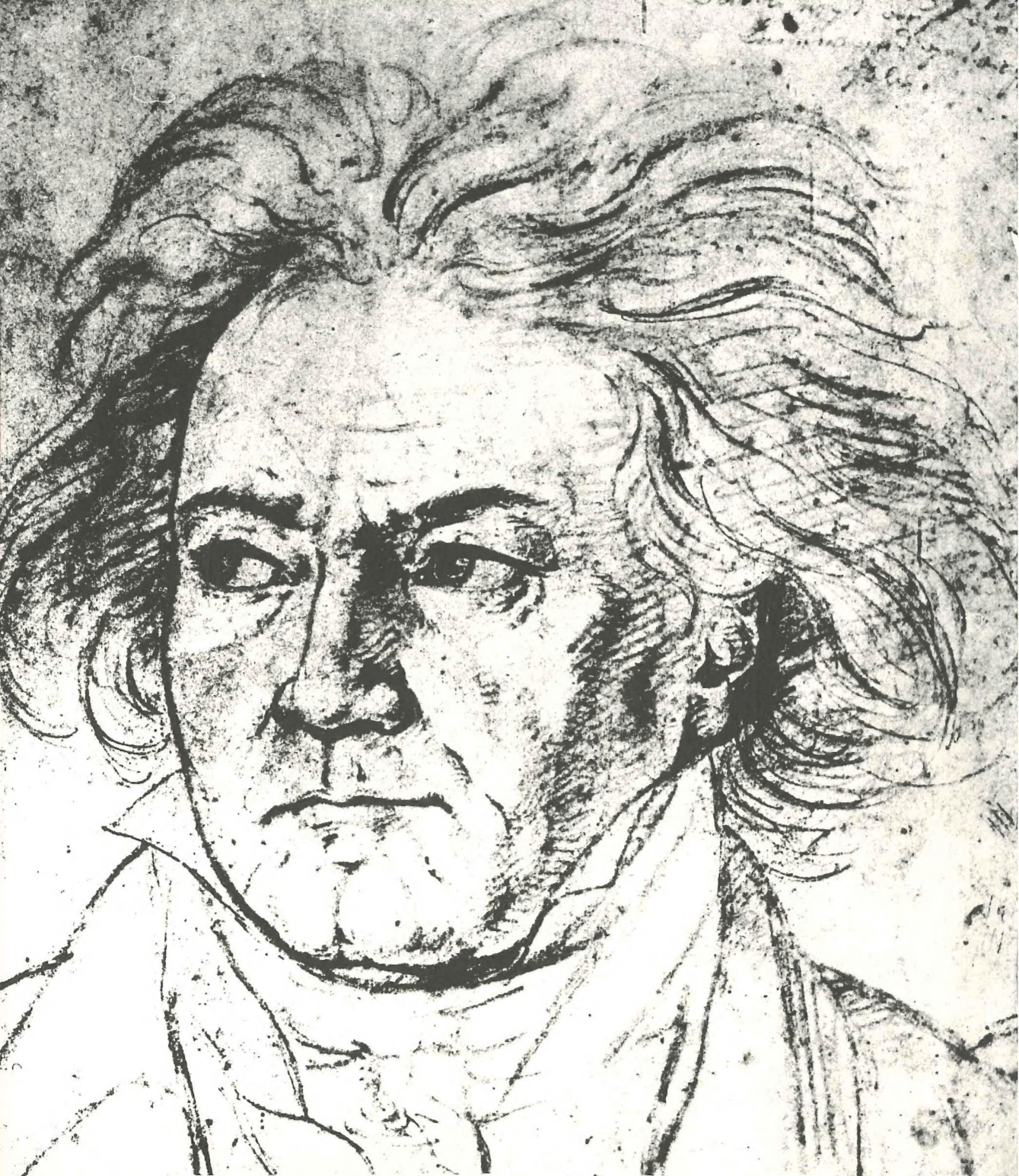
# Beethoven

String  
Quartet  
Cycle

Orford  
String  
Quartet

Walter Hall  
Faculty of Music  
Edward Johnson Building





ON THE COVER: A PAGE OF BEETHOVEN'S SKETCHES FOR QUARTET OPUS 18, NO. 5.



**Beethoven: The String Quartet Cycle – Lectures and Concerts 1977**  
**Orford String Quartet, Quartet-in-Residence, University of Toronto**

LECTURE: JANUARY 13, THURSDAY AT 8 P.M.

Joseph Kerman, University of California, Berkeley  
The Beethoven Quartets

CONCERT: JANUARY 16, SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

Quartet No. 3 in D major, opus 18, no. 3  
Quartet No. 16 in F major, opus 135  
Quartet No. 10 in E flat major, opus 74 "Harp"

LECTURE: FEBRUARY 3, THURSDAY AT 8 P.M.

Norman Rubin, University of Toronto  
"Play it Again, Ignaz" – The Case for Observing Beethoven's Repeat Signs

CONCERT: FEBRUARY 6, SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

Quartet No. 5 in A major, opus 18, no. 5  
Quartet No. 11 in F minor, opus 95 "Serioso"  
Quartet No. 12 in E flat major, opus 127

LECTURE: MARCH 31, THURSDAY AT 8 P.M.

John Beckwith, University of Toronto  
Beethoven and the Classical Finale

CONCERT: APRIL 3, SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

Quartet No. 6 in B flat major, opus 18, no. 6 "La Malinconia"  
Quartet No. 13 in B flat major, opus 130  
Quartet No. 8 in E minor, opus 59, no. 2 "Rasumovsky"

LECTURE: OCTOBER 13, THURSDAY AT 8 P.M.

Harvey Olnick, University of Toronto  
Beethoven and "The Fugue"

CONCERT: OCTOBER 16, SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

Quartet No. 1 in F major, opus 18, no. 1  
"Grosse Fuge" in B flat major, opus 133  
Quartet No. 7 in F major, opus 59, no. 1 "Rasumovsky"

LECTURE: NOVEMBER 10, THURSDAY AT 8 P.M.

Timothy J. McGee, University of Toronto  
The Rhythm of Dance in Beethoven

CONCERT: NOVEMBER 13, SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

Quartet No. 2 in G major, opus 18, no. 2  
Quintet in C major for string quartet and viola, opus 29  
Quartet No. 15 in A minor, opus 132

LECTURE: DECEMBER 1, THURSDAY AT 8 P.M.

Philip Gossett, University of Chicago  
Problems of Composition and Proportion – Early, Middle and Late

CONCERT: DECEMBER 4, SUNDAY AT 3 P.M.

Quartet No. 4 in C minor, opus 18, no. 4  
Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, opus 131  
Quartet No. 9 in C major, opus 59, no. 3 "Rasumovsky"

NOTE: THE ORFORD QUARTET WILL ALSO PERFORM THE MUSICAL ILLUSTRATIONS AT THE SIX LECTURES

**Quartet No. 1 in F major, opus 18, no. 1 (before 1800)**

Allegro con brio  
Adagio affetuoso ed appassionato  
Scherzo: Allegro molto  
Allegro

Eighteenth century Vienna was the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and was, like other imperial capitals, the centre of artistic and intellectual life, and had been for many years. There was more, for this empire was polyglot and the city teemed with southern Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Italians and Poles, many of them musicians. The aristocracy, whether Austrian or of the subject races, kept houses there. There was enormous wealth and great pleasure in the spending of it. To Vienna came the professional musicians either to visit or to stay and it was a great place for composers, for the population was an unquenchable consumer. Not only did the great houses have musical establishments but the people at large made music for their own pleasure, both indoors and outside, and to supply their needs great publishing houses sprang up, such as the brothers Artaria. Haydn trained there, and after his career retired there. Mozart endeavoured to live there, not with too much financial luck but very much to the greater glory of his art; and Beethoven came there as a stiff and reserved young man from Bonn.

It had been Beethoven's intention in coming to Vienna to study with Mozart but he had died the previous year, 1791, so Beethoven put himself with Haydn and Albrechtsberger, the latter teaching him counterpoint three times a week. One thing established itself very quickly — Beethoven proved to be incontrovertibly the best pianist in town and was soon in demand in all the best salons, and he found himself, sometimes to his discomfort, the darling of the aristocracy (he even lived for a time in Prince Lichnowsky's house). It was in these houses that most of his early works were first heard. Although a recognized performer, he was not immediately hailed as a composer. He had to put up with the fact that his older admirers belonged to that school which felt that Handel, Mozart and Haydn had said the very last word in music and that nobody could ever again reach such exalted plains. He resented this keenly, and, being what he was, often reacted very rudely, although at the time he had so very little to show that would have proved otherwise. With those his own age and younger, his pupils, noble and common, his colleagues, professional and amateur, he was able to break ground — he was on much easier social terms with them as well. With Vienna's appetite for music it is natural that, apart from pieces for his own instrument, his earlier efforts would be chamber music. Of his first acknowledged eighteen opus numbers all but one, the first Piano Concerto Op. 15, are chamber music or piano sonatas.

The six quartets of Op. 18, dedicated to the Prince Lobkowitz, were composed between 1798 and 1800, but not in the order of their numberings. No. 1 in F major was the second in order of composition but was placed first at the suggestion of the violinist Schuppanzigh for purely artistic reasons. The quartets were published by Mollo in 1801.

*I. Allegro con brio:* It is quite clear why Schuppanzigh wanted this quartet to appear first: the enormous power of the first movement that is generated by the very opening motif, with its strong outline, both melodically and rhythmically, so easily impressed on the memory and which takes precedence over all other material. This motif, with its extensions, is the first melodic group. Even throughout the bridge, which destroys the hold of the home key, it continues to dominate. The second group, in C major, begins with a new and gentler theme, a syncopated and gentle broken chord idea, which is soon joined by the opening motif. Even the codetta refers to his motif, and the exposition ends in a flurry of scale passages.

The development commences by continuing the scale passages until the key of B flat major is reached where the basic motif again reasserts itself and which will hold the stage to the exclusion of all else for the entire section. Using imitative counterpoint in small blocks, each in a



different key, the tonality moves first to D minor then (shades of the *Eroica* to come) passes through a series of minor keys, each a fourth above the other, until F minor is reached (actually this objective is overshot to B flat minor but F minor is soon established). F minor (the tonic minor of F major) is, in classical thinking, not too closely related to the home key, and a certain tension arises thereby that is only released with the appearance of the recapitulation. The coda, when it comes, is tricky: while giving the impression of further development and constantly threatening to jettison the home key it is in reality driving it home, all the while proclaiming the sovereignty of the basic motif.

*II. Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato:* During his early days in Vienna Beethoven found one of his very closest friends in Karl Friedrich Amenda, a theological student and an excellent amateur violinist. Beethoven played this movement to Amenda and asked him what thoughts had been awakened by it. Amenda replied that it pictured the parting of two lovers. "Good," said Beethoven, "I thought of the scene in the burial vault in *Romeo and Juliet*."

While Beethoven rightly confined his allegro movements to motival development and interplay, in his adagios he could pour out his natural lyricism to his heart's content. The results are adagios of the greatest sublimity, landmarks of musical history. In spite of what could be termed "romantic" tendencies both of melody and harmony they are soundly classical in architecture, and in this instance, firmly disciplined by the sonata principle. The two thematic groups, one minor and the other major, are serene songs, each complete in itself.

*III. Scherzo: Allegro molto:* It was in Haydn's Op. 33 that we find the term scherzo used in place of the minuet, and certainly in these quartets and in Beethoven's early works, the scherzo is a speeded-up minuet, its rhythmic characteristics exaggerated and filled with unexpected things like odd changes of key and inexplicable silences. Although in this movement there are no silences there are certainly sudden and surprising changes of key, right from the opening in fact, where the home key of F major is brusquely cast aside in an unsettled rising sequence. Neither is the Trio section spared for it shoots off into D flat major — into outer space, as it were!

*IV. Allegro:* The humour of the scherzo is carried over into this, a sonata-rondo, a form developed by Haydn. Sonata-rondo combines the rondo, with its system of "closed" melodies, with the intellectual scope of the sonata principle, thus permitting more extended treatment of the ideas. In this movement the central episode contains a "third" theme, traditional in the form, and a contrapuntal working out of the first theme.

#### Quartet No. 2 in G major, opus 18, no. 2 (before 1800)

Allegro  
Adagio cantabile  
Scherzo: Allegro  
Allegro molto quasi Presto

This was the first of this set of quartets to have been finished, but, as remarked above, because of its lighter nature, was placed as number two in the published version.

*I. Allegro:* The first thematic group consists of three ideas, the little flourish in the first violin, the downward (and later upward) broken chord, and a thoughtful cadence formula that, by the way, will be used to close the movement. The material for the bridge is new and, be it noted, anticipates the rhythm of the first idea of the last movement. The second group and the codetta (except for the cadence) are also new and make no reference to the first group — a marked contrast to No. 1. The development, which is richly contrapuntal, employs all the ideas with the exception of the hymn-like second group theme, and the recapitulation, when it arrives, introduces



the first motif in canon between the violins, thus maintaining the counterpoint of the development.

*II. Adagio cantabile:* Although we find the same lyricism as in the slow movement of No. 1, it is much simpler. It is ternary in form (ABA). Section A is an ornate sixteen-bar melody with an extension that ends with a little and new cadence figure. Section B is faster (*Allegro*) and plays with this cadential figure. The A section returns, melodically the same but with greatly elaborated supporting parts.

*III. Scherzo: Allegro:* As in No. 1, this is a speeded-up minuet also with the abrupt changes of key and dynamics. The Trio, because of the connecting passage at the end to lead back to the Scherzo, is a shade longer and is contrapuntally more elaborate than the Scherzo.

*IV. Allegro molto quasi Presto:* This is the most substantial movement of the quartet. Although the first group theme has the "closed" quality of a rondo theme the movement is in sonata form. As in the first movement of No. 1, the first group idea permeates the whole. Indeed, it is the only idea that is developed — and developed it is. The contrapuntal opportunities the idea offers are exploited to the hilt in canonic imitation and other combinations — in fact everything short of fugue! The counterpoint carries through the beginning of the recapitulation as well.

Godfrey Ridout

#### Quartet No. 3 in D major, opus 18, no. 3 (before 1800)

Allegro  
Andante con moto  
Allegro — Maggiore  
Presto

At the beginning of the nineteenth century few music publishers would consider a single string quartet a viable commercial proposition. Symphonies and concertos might be presented to the public in this fashion, graced with their own opus number, but a composer wishing to offer quartets for sale had to be prepared to supply them in groups, usually of three to six. Beethoven's Op. 18 quartets thus appeared in two sets of three, published by the Viennese firm of Mollo. A correspondent of the Leipzig journal, the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, reported briefly in the August 1801 issue that among recent publications issued in Vienna were some splendid works by Beethoven; "three of the quartets give conclusive proof of his artistry but they need to be played often and well for they are difficult to perform and far from popular." This anonymous writer might have said, with more justification, that they were not written to pander to popular taste: it is clear that Beethoven did not address himself lightly to the composition of his first quartets.

The order of the quartets as published (and as they are now numbered) does not reflect the order of composition and Marion Scott has suggested that the most impressive works were chosen to head the two sets. This perhaps explains the relegation of the D major quartet (actually the first to be completed) to the third position, and certainly the appearance of the C minor quartet as the first work in the second set bears out this hypothesis since it is without doubt the most forceful of the six works. In following this particular train of thought we might conclude that Beethoven had certain reservations about the quality of the D major work, but it seems more likely that he was aware that its subdued nature ill fitted it for placement at the beginning of the complete opus.

The first movement is expansive in design, a fact which one could reasonably guess from a first hearing of the spacious opening melody. After such a beginning it is not surprising to discover that Beethoven concerned himself more with maintaining a sense of continuity than with problems of contrast. Contrasts there are but they are deliberately minimized in the interests of greater



coherence and this coherence is carried over into the development section. This is deliberately uneventful, concentrating rather on creating a sense of purposeful motion and allowing the broad articulation of the movement to be perceived without difficulty by the listener. The second movement is close to a rondo in design although the return of the opening lyric theme (a particularly happy invention) with its luxuriantly scored accompaniment is varied each time. The scherzo does little to disturb the mood set up by the two preceding movements so that the sense of continuity extends throughout the whole composition.

Beethoven left extensive sketches for many of his compositions and the existence of successive drafts of a particular movement can often allow us the unique opportunity of watching the composer at work. Without recourse to musical examples it is impossible to demonstrate this evolutionary process but it is worth pointing out that the initial concept of some of Beethoven's germinal themes is unbelievably commonplace, at times even banal. The main theme of the Presto of this quartet is a case in point; the 6/8 metre and the driving rhythm of the final version are already present in the earliest sketches but that is about all. Had Beethoven continued with this first idea the Leipzig journal might have reported differently about the popularity of the quartet; however, it is doubtful whether today we would have the patience to sit through anything so conventional and uninspired. As it is this is probably the strongest movement of the quartet and moreover one which provides the greatest contrast with the style of the remainder of the work. Even here Beethoven seems obsessed with the idea of coherence and the texture of the coda produces the faintest reminiscence of the opening movement, a subtle resonance which helps to integrate this boisterous conclusion into the subdued world of this whole quartet.

#### **Quartet No. 4 in C minor, opus 18, no. 4 (before 1800)**

Allegro ma non tanto  
Scherzo: Andante scherzando quasi Allegretto  
Menuetto: Allegretto  
Allegro - Prestissimo

We tend to accept without question that a classic quartet, symphony or sonata shall have three or four separate movements. At the same time we often feel instinctively that the movements of a particular work have a greater unity about them; that is, they complement each other in a way that does not allow substitution of one movement for another or indeed for the omission of a movement. This may seem an obvious point but it is sometimes difficult to demonstrate exactly why this should be so. The question is of some relevance to the C minor quartet since Beethoven, clearly with the design of the whole work in mind, chose to do without a slow movement and to follow the intense first movement with a scherzo in sonata form and to use a minuet as the third movement. It is true that he qualifies the designation "scherzo" with remarks suggesting a relatively sober tempo but the movement is still light in character. The reason for this design is to be found in the opening Allegro which wears its passionate nature unashamedly on its sleeve; the intensity which is sometimes saved for the slow movement is here combined with the driving power of a first movement sonata form. Such a powerful Allegro calls for a lessening of the emotional temperature in the remainder of the work. In some respects this quartet bears a resemblance to the first symphony, which probably dates from about the same time. The central movements of both works are concerned with analogous compositional problems, and in the case of the minuet there are even some thematic similarities.

Both main themes of the Allegro are of a kind, the second clearly being derived from the first. This is an unusual occurrence in Beethoven and one which has led a number of writers to suggest an early date for this movement. These two themes are separated by some rather bizarre chords which appear on two other occasions, in both cases being used to deflect the movement



towards a new key in a brusque manner. Tovey has warned against reading biographical details into musical works — “even if the works of art show characteristics closely resembling the faults of the author, we have always to remember that the business of the work of art is to be itself” — and yet the musical manners of this movement cannot help but suggest to many listeners the blunt social bearing of the young composer.

The following scherzo starts out as a fugue and the movement oscillates between this texture and one which is more harmonic in conception; in this it is reminiscent of the Mozart of K.387 rather than the fugal finales of Haydn's Op. 20 quartets. Like the former quartet it uses as a new set of imitative entries to mark the move to the dominant key but such a description gives an impression of academicism which is completely foreign to the lighthearted spirit of the music. If this scherzo owes something to the example of Mozart the last movement is more obviously Haydnesque with its resemblance to the “Gipsy Rondo” of the G major Piano Trio. Joseph Kerman finds the movement vapid but he has an uncharacteristic blind spot where this quartet is concerned and, taken in the context of the work as a whole, most listeners will find this Allegro an admirable foil to the passion of the first movement.

John Mayo

#### Quartet No. 5 in A major, opus 18, no. 5 (before 1800)

Allegro  
Menuetto  
Andante cantabile  
Allegro

The natural impulse of mankind to dance often appears in music which, in the intention of the composer, is not dance music. Wagner recognized this when he characterized Beethoven's Symphony in A major as the “apotheosis of the dance.” The A major quartet, if not an “apotheosis”, is nonetheless infused with the rhythmic elan of dance. The opening movement has something of the village about it, a rustic reprieve from the seriousness and artfulness of the preceding quartets in the set. To be sure, there are dark turns of tonality which abruptly draw attention to the shadows, but the basic good-nature always returns. The dance quality is sustained by passing directly to the Menuetto, still in the key of A major. This is the only quartet in opus 18, and one of the few works by Beethoven, where the minuet occupies this position rather than after the slow movement. Beethoven probably had in mind Mozart's quartet in A major, K.464, with which op. 18 no. 5 has some structural similarities, where the minuet is also the second movement. Certainly, he effectively gathers together the dance elements in the first half of the quartet and moves the weight of seriousness to the second half by way of a slow third movement before the brilliant finale. It is the same arrangement of movements which Beethoven would employ with such dramatic effect in the ninth symphony. As in the Mozart quartet, the slow movement is a theme and variations. Although the finale is not obviously derived from Mozart, it has one of those musical figures which begins just after the beat and which many listeners will associate with the “escape” duet of Susanna and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, or the finale of the “Prague” Symphony. The music is all delicacy and high-spirits, and ends suddenly and quietly, with decorum.



**Quartet No. 6 in B flat major, opus 18, no. 6 (before 1800)**

Allegro con brio  
Adagio ma non tanto  
Scherzo: Allegro – Trio  
La Malinconia – Allegretto quasi Allegro

Italian opera often seems to have been just in the wings when Haydn or Mozart or even Beethoven were writing their instrumental pieces. Lacking only a text, the charming dialogue between soprano and bass with which the quartet begins could almost be from a comic ensemble by Rossini, especially when the alto enters to take up the theme with the soprano. After this movement, though, we abandon any suggestion of opera for the world of pure instrumental music with a slow movement which is simple in form but rich in texture and lyrical detail. The Scherzo which follows is by contrast all rhythm, with devious and surprising irregularities of accent.

The section which leads to the finale is an adumbration of those serious interpolations, with vaguely programmatic connotations, which appear in the last quartets or the piano sonata op. 110. The timpani strokes before the finale of the fifth symphony and the "Storm" of the "Pastoral" symphony are also of the same order. The title which Beethoven gave to the Adagio section, *La Malinconia*, foreshadows the *Heiliger Dankgesang* of op. 132, and instructions for the performers – "This piece should be played with the greatest delicacy" – are given again in op. 59 no. 2, where "seriousness" replaces "delicacy". Too much to be dismissed as simply an introduction to the finale while not being a movement in the accepted sense, this Adagio serves as a link between two major sections; it indicates the continuing serious intent of the composer (finales are not to be considered throw-away conclusions, as light-minded as they are light-hearted); and it gives the listener pause for reflection before continuing to the end of the work. During the finale, the recollection of this melancholy interlude interrupts the orderly progress of the music with moments of tonal indecision, to be set aside at the end with the simplest and most direct cadence.

Carl Morey

**Quintet in C major, opus 29 for two violins, two violas and cello (1801)**

Allegro moderato  
Adagio molto espressivo  
Scherzo: Allegro  
Presto

In opus 29, Beethoven added a second viola part to what is in all other respects a string quartet structure. The added part lends richness to the lines and density to the chordal structure. The second viola replaces the cello in some of the lighter sections, making them yet lighter, and reinforces the bass notes with the cello in sections where the other three instruments engage in melodic interplay, thus adding weight. Right from the opening of the first movement the added richness can be heard in the form of a much thicker texture in the inner voices accompanying the first theme. Later, in the driving ending of the first movement and frequently in the second, the added instrument helps the ensemble play with the power of a medium-size string orchestra.

Beethoven no doubt realized that the resulting sound would be heavier, and consequently chose subject matter that would lend itself to the heavier sonority. Although the quintet is quite successful, he chose this combination of instruments for only three other works, op. 4, 104, and 137, preferring the more agile and transparent sound of the string quartet for his major chamber efforts.

As with most of Beethoven's early works, the classical models and techniques of Mozart and Haydn are much in evidence, intermixed with Beethoven's own brand of unorthodox treatment. Both the first and second movements of this work begin with classic-sounding material, but the extreme and unexpected accents in the first movement and the intensity of treatment in the second quickly alert the listener to Beethoven's dramatic intentions.

The first movement is, for the most part, a fairly solid and straight-forward piece. It is not overly serious, and when a chirping figure appears in the recapitulation, we can see Beethoven laughing at himself — much as Haydn did. The movement follows the classical first-movement form although the key relationships are unusual.

The second movement begins as a graceful air in the ornate French style. The opening theme is decorated with an abundance of French graces, reminiscent of some of Mozart's slow movements. Some strong accents intrude a bit upon the opening phrases, but it is not until the second theme has been presented that Beethoven casts off allusions to the elegant and simple French air. The listener is led quickly into a development of the small motivic elements of the themes with an intensity that removes the movement temporarily from the realm of the light classic air. In the middle of the movement the simpler style returns with a strumming accompaniment of the first theme, and thus the movement proceeds, alternately light and frivolous, intense and dramatic.

The third movement is a scherzo and trio which, by this time in Beethoven's compositions, was becoming his standard substitute for the classical minuet and trio. Beethoven calls upon the second viola to thicken the motion and the harmonies (especially effective in the second section of the trio), which moves the scherzo yet another step from the graceful minuet.

But it is for the last movement that Beethoven saves his biggest surprise. This movement resembles nothing quite so much as it does a scene from a contemporary Italian comic opera. In fact, the material could easily be used for one of the dialogue scenes between Don Giovanni and Leporello in Mozart's opera. It would be difficult for any listener to hear this movement and not immediately conjure up an entire scene to fit the music. Beethoven has practically invited us to do so.

The movement begins with a theme that suggests furtive movement on stage, followed by a light, Italianate melodic section in dialogue. These two sections alternate until the middle of the movement where a new melody is introduced — a whimsical mocking of an arioso, much like those assigned to Leporello. For an even closer resemblance to an opera scene the tempo is changed from *presto* to *andante con moto e scherzoso* (medium speed, with motion and humour), and the short phrases are interrupted by unexpected punctuations from the entire quintet. For the second half of the movement the quick tempo returns with the same alternating sections that opened the movement, and the comic arioso melody returns at the end. The final statement is that of the furtive first melody, closing the scene and the quintet on a lighthearted note.

Timothy J. McGee

#### Quartet No. 7 in F major, opus 59, no. 1 "Rasumovsky" (1806)

Allegro  
Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando  
Adagio molto e mesto  
Thème russe: Allegro

Contemporary reaction to this quartet centred around the second of its four movements. It was variously called a "patchwork by a madman", "crazy music" and music intended not for the



present, but for a "later age". Criticism in this "later age" has been more inclined to note that a scherzo as second movement is unusual for Beethoven, and that, anyway, it doesn't follow the usual Scherzo-Trio scheme, but seems to be some kind of sonata form. Furthermore, it fulfills the normal slow-movement function of providing tonal relief, here very normally in the sub-dominant key. It is almost as if ironically to announce that fact that the cello opens the movement with no fewer than fifteen reiterations of the key-note B-flat. The irony of this celebrated cello solo is that the tonality is almost constantly in doubt from that moment forward. Not only does the music immediately move through a series of tonal excursions which introduce some very dissonant relationships to the main key of the movement, but even the unaccompanied theme which directly follows the opening appears to bring the tonality right back to F-major, the main key of the quartet. In the midst of this chaos, a very unpretentious little tune appears, conventionally harmonized in four parts and clearly in B-flat. This tune, which reappears four times in the course of the movement, provides the one real element of stability. It is never developed or even extended, is only altered once, slightly, and changes mode on its final appearance. Its second recurrence is in the tonic key, and tells us that something like a reprise is underway. Between these two appearance in B-flat, it occurs once, transposed up a half-step to B-major. There it is both preceded and followed by rests, isolating it from the surrounding bustle even more clearly than usual. Though it would be difficult to define the boundaries of anything like a real development section, this brief moment of stability marks something like an extreme of dissonance in relation to the tonic, which is followed by a far from orderly retransition to the tonic reprises of the same theme. (It is worth noting that the passage which immediately precedes this "reprise" is likewise separated from the more agitated retransition section by a measure's rest which divides the movement exactly in half.) A slightly varied restatement in the tonic about thirty measures from the end seems to confirm the main key in proper "coda" fashion, but this is followed almost immediately by the tune's final appearance, in E-minor. This is as remote from B-flat as it is possible to be, and also anticipates the minor mode of the ensuing *Adagio*.

The falling shape of the tune, together with its characteristic dotted sixteenth plus thirty-second figure on the first beat, is almost literally mirrored by the movement's other more stable and singable tune, first introduced in F-minor. This melody is subjected to a more extensive elaboration than any of the five or six identifiable themes or motives, and may thus be labelled as the "second subject" of a tentative sonata form. Though it reappears transposed to the tonic minor in the reprise, its first appearance anticipates the key of the *Adagio*, whose theme, in turn, uses the dotted sixteenth plus thirty-second figure in its falling form. It would be pedantic to suggest that all three themes are thus "derived" from one another or from a common motive, but this slender thread helps to unite these middle movements more subtly and interestingly than any intellectualized system of *Leitmotive*.

One other feature which is shared by the main theme of the *Adagio* and the B-flat major theme of the *Allegretto* is that both are stated by the first violin as the highest voice in a more or less normal four-part, homophonic texture. As unremarkable as this relationship may seem, it nevertheless sets these themes rather clearly apart from virtually everything else in the quartet. The norm in all movements but the *Adagio* is for thematic sections to begin in the lowest voice, and to float to the surface either gradually, as in the first movement, or more abruptly, as in the second and fourth. Seen in this way, the central position of the *Adagio* as the "high point" of the four-movement cycle takes on a new dimension.

Quartet No. 8 in E minor, opus 59, no. 2 "Rasumovsky" (1806)

Allegro  
Molto Adagio  
Allegretto - Maggiore  
Finale: Presto

If we choose to regard the three quartets op. 59 as somehow cyclic beyond the boundaries of the individual quartets, the opening measures of this quartet might be interpreted as taking up from the brief E-minor episode just before the end of the *Allegretto* of the preceding one. When the initial thematic statement is followed by a measure's rest and a restatement a half-step higher, in F-major, this suspicion is strengthened, even without any motivic or thematic relationships. I shall return to this "cyclic" theme, but in the meantime pursue a more remote relationship to another, infinitely better known work - the *Eroica* symphony.

Although the effect of the repeated tonic chords which open the Symphony is very different from the alternation of tonic and dominant in the present instance, the seemingly isolated introductory function of each implies a distant kinship. It is the fate of the introductory chords and their function within the movement, in fact, which provide the only really positive points of comparison. In the *Eroica*, the chords return first near the end of the exposition, but rhythmically displaced so as to obscure the main beat. They next appear at the famous dissonant climax of the development section in a rhythmically even more complex form. They fulfill the same function in the reprise and, in their normal form, provide the final measures of the movement. On a simpler level, the opening chords of the E-minor quartet return, disguised and likewise rhythmically displaced, near the end of the exposition in an exactly analogous position. Because they are less static than the bald repetitions of the symphonic movement, they are suitable for modulating passages, and thus appear, in normal form, at the beginning of the development section as well. The altered and rhythmically displaced form reappears twice in the development, once at a place analogous to, but incomparably less dramatic than, the climax in the *Eroica* movement.

This analogy is largely a comparison of opposites, or of the way in which a single device may be used in movements which are otherwise opposites, even in mode. The second, *Adagio* movements of each work are likewise opposites in mode, and do not even share as obvious a characteristic as the repeated chords of the first movements. Still, still, there are reminiscences, however faint. The first theme of the quartet's *Adagio* gives the impression, at least for the first two measures, that it is going to be in C-sharp minor. This impression is quickly dispelled, and the entire melody repeated fully harmonized to confirm the E-major tonality. The extreme chromaticism of the accompanying harmony nevertheless leaves a minor aftertaste, in spite of these reassurances. When the second, more forthright theme follows, therefore, it is all but impossible to escape the impression that this is a major theme coming after a principal section in a minor key. The effect is so like that of the transition from the principal section of the *Eroica*'s funeral march to its major "trio", in fact, that all other associations between the two works will depend on the strength of this one. The association does not depend entirely on this minor-to-major transition, however, as it is likewise suggested by the dotted figure which accompanies the quartet's major theme, evoking nothing so much as a dead march. The rising triadic gesture of each theme is likewise suggestive, but it is the totality of these characteristics which make the association between the two movements a good possibility. Carl Czerny reported that Beethoven conceived this movement while "contemplating the starry sky and thinking of the music of the spheres". If we credit this story, we may fairly ask whether the music of the *Eroica*'s funeral march was somehow part of Beethoven's nocturnal vision of heavenly music.

Just as the finale of the F-major quartet vacillates tantalizingly between the main key and its relative minor, so the E-minor quartet presents an even more open conflict between C-major



and the main key in its final movement. Abrupt and distant modulation was a feature of the E-minor quartet's first movement, and a subtle major-minor ambiguity of the second, but such a direct confrontation of third-related keys is not found elsewhere. In spite of its harmonic oddities, however, this final movement seems really quite refreshingly normal coming after the rhythmic quirkiness of the preceding *Allegretto* and the deliberately clumsy contrapuntal treatment of its *Thème russe*. In its own way, this *Allegretto* is nearly as futuristic as its counterpart in the F-major quartet. Within the context of op. 59, then, the "bi-tonality" of this final movement almost seems conventional.

Robert Falck

#### Quartet No. 9 in C major, opus 59, no. 3 "Rasumovsky" (1806)

Introduzione: Andante con moto – Allegro vivace  
Andante con moto quasi Allegretto  
Menuetto: Grazioso  
Allegro molto

This is the third of the three "Rasumovsky" Quartets of 1806, named for their dedicatee, Count Andrei Kyrillovich Rasumovsky, Russian diplomat, music patron, and amateur violinist. Beethoven referred to them, in a letter to a publisher, as "new violin quartets", adding "[I] now intend to devote myself almost exclusively to this kind of work."

"New" is an understatement. The Rasumovsky Quartets represent an explosive metamorphosis of the quartet genre, paralleling those which Beethoven had made for the sonata, the symphony, the concerto – and strongly characterizing his so-called "second style period". In this process, established classical models are not destroyed, but enormously lengthened and expanded, and imbued with a forcefulness and a brilliant exuberance of expression which understandably bewildered and upset early audiences.

The third Quartet of the series begins with a slow introduction – a feature found in no previous Beethoven quartet, and one more usually associated with the symphonic medium. A rare precedent for this is Mozart's Quartet K. 465, also in C major. The introduction here has the same effect of anticipating the scope and seriousness of the work as a whole; but there the similarity ends. Beethoven's introduction starts with that most mysterious and uncertain chord of classical harmony, the diminished seventh. The music progresses gropingly, cohering loosely through the constant descent of the cello scale line, which at length comes to rest on the leading-note, B.

After what has amounted to a series of mysterious avoidances of the security of the tonic, C, this haven is still scarcely touched until we are well into the ensuing Allegro. This whole piece is marked by the incisive up-beat figure with which it begins. It appears in the transition, and again, imitatively, in the course of the second theme-group – and it completely dominates the development, where it becomes first telescoped into a dialogue between upper and lower pairs of instruments, and then doubled in speed for an effect of excitement and animation. In view of what follows in the rest of the Quartet, the imitative presentation of both the second theme and the staccato closing theme here is significant. The reprise of the opening theme of the Allegro shows the original first-violin flights completely transformed in character and in accompanimental setting: what was merely incisive at the beginning now appears as a dynamic outgrowth of the long central development.

His pupil Carl Czerny related that Beethoven had "pledged himself to weave a Russian melody into every quartet" of the Opus 59 set, in honour of Rasumovsky. The "Thèmes russes" (so labelled by the composer) in numbers 1 and 2 were borrowed from a collection of 150 Russian songs published in Vienna in 1790 by Ivan Pratch. Though no such overt borrowing is acknow-

ledged for this third Quartet, several commentators have noted a deliberately Russian character in the slow movement, citing the overall spirit of a sort of ritual lament and specifically the rigorous deep cello pizzicati, which recur as an inexorable detail, and the decidedly chant-like cadence-theme.

The third movement is retrospective — a real minuet, dance-like in accentuation, but courtly rather than brusque, with rhythms that are ornamental rather than insistent. The minuet often seemingly functioned for Beethoven as a quasi-nostalgic mode of musical thought precisely in the midst of his more experimental reaches (cf. the Eighth Symphony or even the coda of the Diabelli Variations). A reminder of the Quartet's mysterious groping introduction is suggested in the coda, developing the principal minuet motifs in a brief harmonic excursion which by its strangeness and suspension prepares the way to the finale without any formal break.

As was typical of Beethoven's works, especially in the second period, the Quartet is seen as concentrating its expressive meaning in the finale, which implies those feelings of fulfillment or victory-over-struggle so often stressed by 19th-century musical writers.

Beethoven here adopts the same sort of mixture of fugal and sonata principles that Mozart used in the finale of his Quartet K387 in G major, a work he probably knew. Early fugue-like quartet finales include Haydn's Op. 20, numbers 2, 5, and 6, and Mozart's K.168 and K.173; and fugal writing of course is one of the hallmarks of Beethoven's last quartets. In Mozart's K.387, and in this work, however, there is a unique tension between counterpoint and sonata-structure, resulting in a special brightness and wit for the Mozart and in exceptional propulsion and brilliance for the Beethoven.

The propulsive character derives (as in the first movement) from the upbeat character of the main theme — in fact a double-upbeat in this instance. The counterpoint is initially rather crude — though one knows from the fugatos of the Third Symphony, written the year before, that Beethoven had abundant skill in this area. By the fourth entry, in the first violin part, there are just two voices, doubled in octaves. But the fugal procedure has resulted in a build-up both of onward motion and of volume — a fugally-realized Rossinian crescendo.

A secondary theme grows from a brief four-way conversation in short snippets of subdued excitement. The development gives us the initial fugue-subject in inversion and in close canon, and then in a series of long, highly dramatic, crescendo-phrases taken by each instrument in turn — one of the most celebrated passages in all the Beethoven quartets, and justly so. In the reprise a chromatic countertheme is combined with the fugue-subject. The coda, with its emphatic optimism, great length, and boundless energy, strains the quartet medium to its very limits.

John Beckwith

#### Quartet No. 10 in E flat major, opus 74 "The Harp" (1809)

Poco Adagio — Allegro  
Adagio ma non troppo  
Presto — Più presto quasi prestissimo  
Allegretto con Variazioni

The quartet op. 74 occupies a unique position among Beethoven's works in this genre, and is rather striking in style. It was written in the summer of 1809, three and one-half years after the Razumovsky quartets, and is the first to carry an opus number all its own. It is not strikingly progressive, however — this progressive character is reserved for the F minor quartet composed a year later. The immediately striking aspect of the Harp Quartet, on the other hand, is its calm normality after the vigorous symphonic style of the three previous quartets. Yet in rather subtle ways it does prepare the way for the quartets to come.



Kerman suggests that this relaxed, approachable style might have been a calculated political move on Beethoven's part. The work is dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz who was one of three contributors to a life-time annuity for Beethoven, arranged in March of the same year. As a grateful gesture, this style was a wise choice, in view of the reluctance that met the innovative Razumovsky quartets. But the key of this work may also be a clue to its style. As Mies indicates (Beethoven's Sketches, p. 180), the key of Eb is often associated in Beethoven's mind with either a ceremonial mood or one of tenderness and grace. Certainly the latter qualities apply well to the Harp Quartet, but it is not only in the quartet field that this key and mood had come to the fore, since Beethoven completed the Eb major piano concerto (#5) and the Eb sonata, "Les Adieux" in the same year. These two works and the Harp Quartet appear in the same sketchbook, as do corrections for the Eb piano trio, op. 70, no. 2, and this last even has the same keys as the quartet in its inner movements. In the light of all this, perhaps a general sense of relief from financial concerns is a more appropriate explanation for the quartet's mood.

As for the relaxed nature of the work, it is immediately obvious. The lyric themes of the first and second movements, for instance, eschew both driving symphonic motives and agonized passion, settling rather for an effect of flowing stability. The theme-and-variations form of the last movement is also tailor-made for providing variety within unity. Its moderate tempo and the humorously-synccopated theme set a mood of pleasant enjoyment which is carefully maintained by alternating staccato and legato variations. Even the minor key and gnome-like bustling of the scherzo can't upset the overall serenity — they just enliven it temporarily.

It is true that the slow introduction to the work is far from stable. After the first chord, there is no sense of tonic until the beginning of the first movement proper, but there is nevertheless a greater sense of direction than in the introduction to the previous quartet. Perhaps that is because of the strong pull toward the key of Ab, the sub-dominant. The theme of the first movement also skirts this key before moving predictably to the dominant for the second theme-group, and this lessens the tension of the dominant arrival.

Related to the relaxed mood, and equally unexpected, is the light texture throughout the work. The clue to this comes in the first-movement bridge with the pizzicato arpeggios to which the quartet owes its nickname. Here they are only a short episode, but the real surprise is that this charming effect also monopolizes a full quarter of the development section where one usually expects contrapuntal motivic work, agitation, and frequent modulations. In fact, the sweeping accelerando of the harp motif elaborates a single dominant-seventh chord, and a further half of the development is solidly in C major; this development can't avoid sounding more like an excursion, albeit a somewhat fussy one. The coda, too, which offers a second possibility for development, instead limits counterpoint to a sequence of imitations on the first theme, and again awards prominence to the harp motif. The result is a total avoidance of the dramatic tension customary in first movements in sonata form. The first violin's soloistic figuration in the coda is now hardly a surprise. It is perfectly at home in this unusual quartet-texture and enhances the colour effect of the harp motif. In lieu of symphonic effects, Beethoven is stretching the quartet-style in the direction of the concerto.

A slightly denser texture marks the second movement, a theme with two variations separated by contrasting episodes. The greater density is just sufficient to create a very lush sound — an excellent backdrop for the florid ornamentation of the variations. Real text-book counterpoint is purposely exploited in the Trio section of the third movement, but only as a joke, since the texture remains light and airy. Beethoven doubles the joke by bringing this section back again after the repeated scherzo. Kerman emphasizes the parallels between this movement and the Scherzo of the recently-composed fifth symphony, but the intent is far less serious in the quartet, for the run-on ending here leads not to a thundering celebration, but a perfectly balanced variation set with just a touch of refined humour.

This quartet is not entirely isolated in style, however. The forte interjections followed by a halt, in both the introduction and the first movement proper, create interruptions in the flow of the form. An equally rude about-face introduces the final variation in the Adagio movement as well. And similar interruptions, by far more drastic means, become a major feature of the first-movement form in the opus 95 quartet the next year. Beethoven's forecasting of his key sequences, which became so important in the late quartets, is also in evidence here. The sub-dominant key of the second movement, for instance, was presaged by the Ab tendencies early in the first movement, and Db, the key of the Adagio's second lyrical melody, was hinted at in the first tune. Furthermore, this key is used in the Scherzo for a skittering melody of upward arpeggios and descending scales, and here it is in the Neapolitan relationship to the tonic C minor. Though a remote one, this Neapolitan relationship is not unusual in Beethoven's compositions. In fact, it has a prominent place in quartets written immediately before and after this one, the op. 59, no. 2, and the op. 95.

The most prophetic of this quartet's style features, however, is probably also its most obvious. For the very atmosphere of calmness and confidence which pervades this work is also common in the late quartets. There, however, it appears as a greater novelty, juxtaposed with movements of much greater density or vigour. And in that sense the quartet op. 74 is not only a pleasant backwater in which to catch one's breath for the challenges of the later quartets — it actually prepares the way for them.

Garnet Ward

#### Quartet No. 11 in F minor, opus 95 "serioso" (1810)

Allegro con brio  
Allegretto ma non troppo  
Allegro assai vivace ma serio  
Larghetto espressivo — Allegretto agitato

Composed in 1810, about a year after the relatively accessible Op. 74, the *quartetto serio*, Op. 95, puts Beethoven in the role of strongman. Practically every page of the score shows him avoiding the easy and the predictable — indeed, avoiding what the age of Haydn and Mozart called good taste. Instead, we hear him forcing the musical materials to conform to his will. The result is quintessential Beethoven: vigorous, demonic, surging, wrenching. It is also a work that responds poorly to thematic analysis, as Beethoven seems more concerned with textures, harmonies, and key areas.

The characteristic gesture of the piece is a wrenching one: like Atlas changing his grip, Beethoven forces the tonal centre up a half-step. Now it is a curious fact that adjacent *notes* (say, e and f) present one of the simplest, most obvious relationships, but adjacent *chords* or *keys* (say, E major and F major) are very difficult to reconcile in tonal music. Of course, Beethoven has fallen partial victim to the world he helped spawn: his powerful device has become commonplace to those assaulted by it in the works of subsequent composers, good and bad. (When Otello breaks up the brawl, asserting his power by lifting an F-sharp chord to G singlehandedly, his gesture is dramatically perfect, but neither new nor rare.) But it is surprisingly easy to recapture the innocence that Beethoven shocked with his muscular modulations.

The first movement immediately sets the rules: the opening idea, in octaves, presents both food for thought (and action!) in its bottom d-flat, c, d-natural, but also establishes the characteristic sound of "unison" swirling scales that will return at Beethoven's most imperious moments. After an angular double-dotted "response" subsides, the 'cello bursts back in, not on the expected tonic, but one half-step higher, on the "Neapolitan". (The fact of a Neapolitan second



statement is not revolutionary itself – the “Appassionata” sonata and the second Razoumovsky quartet begin with similar juxtapositions and indeed let the relationship colour their first movements. What is special about this quartet is the force, the brutality of this and other juxtapositions. We are not being led; we are being dragged.) After this Neapolitan has given way to a series of landings on the dominant, C, and Beethoven has impressed the C upon us with swirling *fortissimo* unison scales, he presents, quietly, his second subject – not in C, but in *its* Neapolitan, D-flat! As if that weren’t assertion enough, he interrupts that presentation with *fortissimo* unison scales, eventually on D-flat’s Neapolitan, but first on the Neapolitan of *its* dominant! As implied already, what is more remarkable than the existence of these assertions, and the complex of tonal and harmonic relationships they establish, is, first, their demonic effect, and, secondly, the amazing integration of small-scale (motivic, thematic) and large-scale (harmonic, tonal) patterns in this movement – in fact, in this quartet.

The second movement, an *allegretto ma non troppo* “slow” movement, presents two kinds of material: AB(A)BACoda, where B is a very expressive chromatic fugue, “(A)” is a reminiscence of the opening cello scale between the two fugue sections, and the Coda presents a combination of A and B. The key of the movement, D major, is very far from F, and sets up the simple shock at the start and the elaborate link to the third movement at the end.

Beethoven connects these two movements, without pause, by building chords around the note D, arriving at one very memorable diminished chord, which will return. But this chord gets him not to f minor, but only to c minor, so he presents the first section twice, in the tonic only the *second* time! As this pseudo-scherzo (*ma serio*) with two trios unfolds, it develops that the first “trio” or B section will end in D major, like the second movement, giving Beethoven the chance to use the same powerful built-in transition. At the end of the following “scherzo” or A section, he follows the final cadence with that same diminished chord still again, but this time to lead “backwards”, from f to D, the starting key of the second B section. This use of a single chord – and it is quite a recognizable *objet sonore* – in so many different contexts tends to mitigate the fact that Beethoven is rewriting the rules of tonality as he goes along, and with the same sort of bullheaded determination that characterized the first movement.

It has not been possible to mention all the half-step, “Neapolitan” relationships, although they are mostly prominent enough. But Beethoven leaves us no choice in the finale. First, the viola colours the opening with its expressive c, d-flat, c. Next, the first violin’s high d-flat, b, c would be striking even without the eerie doubling by the second violin. Third, the tune of the *allegretto* keeps those notes resonating until all four instruments, *fortissimo*, wrench their c’s up to d-flats. This relationship becomes especially poignant toward the end of the *allegretto*, after the theme has dissolved, and before the F-major, *Allegro* “happy ending” puts this rising chromatic motion in a comforting if not innocent setting.

Norman Rubin

#### Quartet No. 12 in E flat major, opus 127 (1824)

Maestoso – Allegro  
Adagio, ma non troppo e molto cantabile  
Scherzando vivace – Presto  
Finale – Allegro con moto

In opus 127, the first of the late quartets, Beethoven serves notice that he has become fully divorced from the classic intention, if not the classic exterior form, of the string quartet. He has broken the spiritual bond with the past, and in these late works he creates a new technique to communicate at a new intellectual and emotional depth.

In the classic quartet the four movements display four individual moods, each one having a separate form and function: movement one contains the deep or serious and intense mood, movement two is a lyrical melody related to an aria, and the last two movements are in the forms of an elegant dance and a light, sometimes humorous, finale. Beethoven understood the functions of the four classic movements and throughout his early and middle quartets he began each work with the classic model. His temperament would not allow him to conform fully, but there was always a general resemblance to the movements of Mozart and Haydn.

The new attitude taken in his late quartets is evident in the lack of anything more than the most superficial observance of the form of the individual movements. In opus 127 all that is left of the classic model is tempo and metre; the traditional four separate moods have been replaced by four aspects of a single mood.

The idea of attempting to unify the several movements of a single composition had occurred to Beethoven several times in the past, and in each case his solution was to use common thematic material. In the late quartets he found a different solution: a single, multi-faceted mood, which results in unity on a different level. He changes the thematic material from movement to movement, but it hardly seems to matter; there is no change in the essential message or in the intensity of expression.

The four movements of opus 127 collectively take us on a tortured and twisted journey through one of Beethoven's most complex moods, to a final bright moment at the end of the last movement. The first movement surprises us with its alternation of heavy and light material, the fourth dazzles with its energetic rhythms, and the third calls attention to its unexpected and forceful rhythms. But the centre of this quartet is definitely the second movement.

None of the movements equal the emotional breadth of the second movement. It is there, in the form of theme and variations, that Beethoven draws our attention to the extent of his frustration. The theme wanders over a range of an octave and a half and seems at first to be somewhat lacking in direction. It is only after we follow the theme through a labyrinth of complex rhythms and harmonies that we realize the purpose of the indirect theme and the skill with which the message of intensity and frustration has been conveyed.

The other movements contribute complementary views of the same mood. The insistent drive and the short, direct rhythms of the third movement serve as a strong contrast to the long lines of the second. The short motives stop and start, jump forward and then hesitate, suggesting impatience and confusion. The first and fourth movements call on dance rhythms to emphasize their points. In the first movement we are given the suggestion of a graceful minuet melody as the raw material. It begins as a gentle contrast to an intense opening statement but, as the movement progresses, the minuet is distorted by association, and finally delivers a message far more intense than its gentle first statement. In the last movement a crude and raucous peasant dance rhythm intrudes on an already nervous theme and, although the movement ends brightly, there is no suggestion of lightheartedness. The unification of the movements — the message of the quartet — lies in the painful unrest and uncertainty common to each facet of the single mood.

This is the first of Beethoven's works with this new point of organization and from this work forward the quartets are unified on the emotional level. Beethoven has infused the classical form with a new kind of content; only the exterior is left to remind the listener of its origins.

Timothy J. McGee



### Quartet No. 13 in B flat major, opus 130 (1826)

Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro

Presto

Andante con moto ma non troppo: Poco scherzoso

Alla danza tedesca: Allegro assai

Cavatina: Adagio molto espressivo

Finale: Allegro

### The “Grosse Fuge” in B flat major, opus 133 (1826)

These quartets are discussed together because opus 130 was first performed in March, 1826 with the *Grosse Fuge* as its finale, Beethoven's original intention. On that occasion, the two “lighter” movements, the *Presto* and the *Alla danza tedesca*, were encored but the Great Fugue was received with consternation and bewilderment. “Oh the oxen, the asses!” Beethoven reportedly exclaimed. “Of course, just those dainties – *those* they want served up again! Why not rather the fugue?”

Beethoven's publisher, Artaria, so we read, with difficulty persuaded the composer to write a new finale, undertaking to publish and pay for separately the Fugue as well as a four-hand piano arrangement. The Fugue was indeed detached from Op. 130 and appeared posthumously as Op. 133. Beethoven composed a new finale the present *Allegro*, a year later after finishing the Quartet Opus 135; it was his last completed composition.

Why did Beethoven really write a new finale? Did he, vexed by incomprehension, attracted by Artaria's fees for extra publications and weighed down by poor health, resign himself to Artaria's request? His intransigence in artistic matters is well documented: he had never given in to such demands, he had never compromised his musical integrity. It is unlikely that he should have done so now. It is the present writer's conviction that Beethoven actually changed his mind and for his own strictly musical reasons. He must have felt that the Fugue had sprung the bounds of the initial conception and had become an entity in its own right.

This question of the two finales has troubled scholars and performers alike. As long ago as 1859, a Viennese quartet “corrected” Beethoven's decision by performing opus 130 with the original fugal finale, a precedent that no doubt emboldened musicians to take sides. Not infrequently, the Great Fugue is declared to be the only “appropriate” conclusion and the Allegro Finale is dismissed as too light weight. While such intrusions into Beethoven's musical affairs must of itself be suspect – no one dreams of restoring the *Andante Favori* to the “Waldstein” Sonata, nor the *Alla danza tedesca* of opus 130 to opus 132 for which they were first intended – the fact remains that one's personal preferences should not matter since the composer himself made the decision.

Behind all this is the important question of the role of the finale as such, and for Beethoven it posed a real compositional problem. If one considers such works as the fugal finale of the C major Quartet, opus 59, number 3 and such late works as the finale of the Ninth Symphony, the fugal finales of the D major Cello Sonata, opus 102, number 2, and those of the piano sonatas, opp. 101, 106 and 110, one realizes that Beethoven had revised the function of the finale: by shifting the weight and apex of the sonata cycle from the first to the last movement, by resolving in the finale complexities that arise in the earlier movements, a powerful cumulation could be gained for the work as a whole.

The Quartet's six movements (instead of the usual four) display the widest range of moods, contrasts and textures, enriching the expressive scope of the work in every direction. The key changes from movement to movement underline these contrasts. With the move of the *Presto* to the parallel minor, the *Andante* to the relative D flat, the *Alla danza tedesca* to G and the *Cavatina* to E flat, the expectation of a return to the tonic B flat is heightened. The return takes

place in a series of falling fifths in the bass (G-C-F-B flat), and it occurs in the opening bars of both the Allegro and Great Fugue finales. The lengthy development section of the Allegro finale revues again the keys of the earlier movements; similarly, the Fugue Finale sums up the major keys of the entire work. Such tonal plans frequently organize a single movement; here one extends over the six movements of opus 130.

Motivic inter-relations between the movements plays a part in opus 130. The Adagio motive that opens the quartet recurs in some guise in each movement. It is heard as the bass line in the opening of the *Presto*, thence as an inner voice; and in the middle section of the *Presto*, much transformed, it becomes the guiding framework of the top part. The same *Adagio* motive is hinted at in the opening and coda of the *Andante*. It is suggested at the end of the *Alla danza tedesca* (its reappearance being marked by the divergence from the regular four measure phrase units) and in a subtle way, it has links to the opening of the *Cavatina*. Finally it can be traced in details of the Fugue and Allegro finales, demonstrating the organic connection of both finales to the body of the quartet.

### The "Grosse Fuge" in B Flat, opus 133

The many discreet sections of the "Grosse Fuge", which are not usual to the fugal process, seem to suggest, in a very general way, affinities with the sonata: a large tri-partite section (A, B, C), its modified restatement framed by an introduction (overture) and coda. A ground plan of the main sections (not by any means a comprehensive analysis of the work) is appended below as a listener's aid and a partial guide through some of the complexities.

- Overture The fugue subject is presented in four fragmentary guises, much as in a table of contents anticipating the major sections that follow;
- A<sup>1</sup> the main fugue, consistently loud and dense in texture; four types of fugal presentation with episodes, counterpoints and modified countersubjects;
- B<sup>1</sup> polyphonic rather than fugal, and very soft with contrast of key and texture, somewhat like a slow movement; leads by a slow trill to
- C<sup>1</sup> a short section, soft, resembling a scherzo;
- A<sup>2</sup> as in A<sup>1</sup> consistently loud but rather like a development section; combines elements of the scherzo, first with the fugue subject in long notes and then with the countersubject; leads directly into
- B<sup>2</sup> a modified and condensed return of B<sup>1</sup>, now loud;
- C<sup>2</sup> expanded and recapitulatory return of C<sup>1</sup>, again soft;
- Coda begins in the manner of the Overture, but the motivic fragments appear in reverse order: first the countersubject, followed by B<sup>1</sup>, then the opening statement of the fugue subject (now in the home key of B flat) extended to form a rounded melody; the last few moments provide what has been previously missing: thematic completion, rhythmic and textural simplification, harmonic and tonal resolution.



**Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, opus 131 (1826)**

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo  
Allegro molto vivace  
Allegro moderato — Adagio  
Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile  
Presto  
Adagio quasi un poco andante  
Allegro

The climactic uniqueness of the five string quartets composed by Beethoven during the last years of his life has frequently been emphasized. An attempt to make any comparative value judgment among these works is hardly appropriate because it is bound to be more or less subjective; nevertheless, there seems to be some substance to the claim that the C# minor quartet stands out in dramatic expressiveness. A dynamic and profound diversification and exploitation of small motivic cells within the boundaries of extreme concentration and concision contribute to maintain the listener's intense interest throughout the lengthy work.

The score indicates no less than seven numbered movements; it should be noted, however, that No. 3 represents merely a short recitative-like introduction to the subsequent variation section, while the twenty-eight measures of No. 6, marked *Adagio quasi un poco Andante*, effectively prepare the *Allegro* movement of the *Finale*.

The use of a wide range of artfully combined keys distributed throughout the whole work was viewed by Beethoven's contemporaries as a bold innovation. Today we may still be able to appreciate, for example, the surprising change from C# minor to D major at the beginning of the second movement, although our more or less considerable exposure to such phenomena as modulatory chromaticism and atonality seems to have mitigated to a certain extent our sensitivity to key relations.

It is safe to assume that an audience faced with such a complex and demanding work as the quartet under discussion will approach the music with widely differing attitudes. Some listeners will be mainly interested in the structural aspects of the composition; possibly armed with a miniature score, they will enjoy recognizing such features as the following:

No. 1, marked *Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo*, represents a free fugue. The theme is melodically, (implied) harmonically, rhythmically, and dynamically well profiled. It centres upon the dominant G# which serves at the beginning as the basis of the "up-flexure" G#-B#-C#-A-G# and at the end as the basis of the "down-flexure" G#-F#-E-F#-G#. These two figures are welded by the overlapping inner "pendulum" A-G#-F#-A-G#-F# into a coherent melodic line. In a regular exposition each of the four instruments enters at a distance of four 2/2 measures to join in a polyphonic interplay gradually intensifying until it resolves into a long sustained tonic triad.

Sharply contrasting with the first movement is No. 2; there the *Adagio* is succeeded by an *Allegro molto vivace*, the key and mode of C# minor by D major, the polyphonic texture by an essentially homophonic one, and the 2/2 by a 6/8 metre serving as a framework for extended commetric alternations between quarter and eighth notes. Within this pattern occur occasionally groupings of contrasting *forte* and *piano* measures and, more conspicuously, a sequence of harmonic frictions coupled with *sforzati* placed contrametrically on the second halves of consecutive 6/8 measures.

In a similar vein our hypothetical analytically-minded listeners will attempt (after a brief acquaintance with the aforementioned recitative-like No. 3) to trace the ingenuous transformations of the main theme unfolding in the Theme-and-Variation Movement No. 4. Turning to the *Presto* Movement No. 5, they might be tempted to investigate the opposition between the straightfor-

wardness and almost folk-like texture of this Scherzo with the subtle refinement of the preceding variations. And hopefully encouraged by the relatively unproblematic nature of the Presto they might try to penetrate the complex structural edifice of the crowning Finale.

To another type of listeners the music will serve as a vehicle evoking a string of emotions and emotionally charged programmatic images. At first sight one might be inclined to associate such listeners with music lovers rather than with professional musicians. That this evaluation is, however, not at all justified, is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by Richard Wagner's interpretation of the work. On the occasion of a performance of the quartet in Zurich he wrote in December 1854 a short introduction in which he characterized the different movements as follows:

*Adagio*: Schwernütige Morgenandacht eines tiefleidenden Gemütes. (Melancholic morning devotion of a profoundly suffering soul.)

*Allegro*: Anmutige Erscheinung, neue Sehnsucht zum Leben erweckend. (Graceful vision, inspiring new longing for life.)

*Theme and Variations*: Reiz, Milde, Verlangen, Liebe. (Charm, gentleness, desire, love.)

*Scherzo*: Laune, Humor, Ausgelassenheit. (Caprice, humour, exuberance.)

*Finale*: Übergang zur Resignation. Schmerzliches Entsagen. (Transition toward resignation. Most grievous renunciation.)

Sixteen years later Wagner expanded and moulded this outline into a colourful interpretation of the psychological content of the quartet, likening it to the innermost happenings in a day of Beethoven's life.

Although the two aforementioned listening approaches seem to be essentially different from each other, they are in fact basically complementary and reflect the intimate correlation between musical structure and expressive content. It is precisely the structural perfection of this quartet that generates the depth and breadth of its expressiveness.

Mieczyslaw Kolinski

#### Quartet No. 15 in A minor, opus 132 (1825)

Assai sostenuto – Allegro

Allegro ma non tanto

Molto adagio – Andante (Heiliger Dankgesang...)

Alla marcia, assai vivace – Più allegro

Allegro appassionato

This is one of the three quartets (opp. 127, 132 and 130) commissioned in 1822 by the Russian Prince Galitzin and dedicated to him. Completed in 1825, well before opp. 130 and 131, it is, opus number notwithstanding, the second of the cycle of the last five quartets. It is also the first to break out of the customary four movement frame, anticipating the six movements of opus 130 and the seven sections played without break of opus 131, the two quartets with which opus 132 has most in common: unusual length, shared motives and similar stylistic premises. The mixed critical reception of these most mature of Beethoven's works makes the respectful but carefully non-committal account of the first public rehearsal of opus 132 in a Vienna inn by the visiting English composer, Sir George Smart, worth quoting:

"... There was a numerous assembly of professors (i.e., musicians) ... This quartette is three-quarters of an hour long. They played it twice. The four performers were Schuppanzigh, Holz, Weiss, and Lincke (the famous Quartet that first performed many Beethoven works). It is most chromatic and there is a slow movement entitled 'Praise for the



recovery of an invalid.' Beethoven intended to allude to himself I suppose for he was very ill during the early part of this year. He directed the performers, and took off his coat, the room being warm and crowded. A staccato passage not being expressed to the satisfaction of his eye, for alas, he could not hear, he seized Holz's violin and played the passage a quarter of a tone too flat. I looked over the score during the performance. All paid him the greatest attention. . ."

In the first movement, Beethoven takes the greatest pains to withhold until the very last three concluding measures the clear affirmation of the A minor tonality in which the piece is cast. The resulting harmonic restlessness is in keeping with the brooding, yet passionate disquiet that is encountered at the very outset. The movement opens polyphonically with a quiet chromatic motive, one that can be traced in opus 131 and the "Grosse Fuge" opus 133. After eight measures, a slashing violin figure breaks in for two brief measures. It in turn gives way to a third motive played softly by the cello in the high strained register of the violin. The juxtaposition of motives of such contrasting affection and the abruptness of the discontinuities, seem to concentrate in the opening moments of a single movement the contrasts of mood earlier quartets realized only in the movement to movement succession of an entire quartet. And these discontinuities continue in the bridge passages and in the short-lived lyricism of the second group. The development is unusually long. It touches just about every possible diatonic tonality and several times arouses unfulfilled expectations of reprise. The actual reprise is signaled by two quiet held chords that combine harmonically the opening chromatic motive; and the piece closes with driving cadential chords that tell us we are at last in A minor but they do not dispel the prevailing disquiet.

The second movement has the tonal definition denied us in the Allegro and the clear ABA design of a scherzo. The A motive is a two-part polyphonic elaboration of a simple harmonic sequence. The B section, or trio, has an inner "aba" shape too: the "a" features the wandering drone of a musette, the "b" is the only part of the scherzo that is genuinely dance-like in character, and there is an enigmatic, brusque sixteen bar transition back to "a" after which the scherzo proper is repeated.

The unquestioned gem of the quartet and its centre piece is the Molto adagio slow movement. As Sir George Smart, observed above, it alludes to the composer's serious illness while working on the quartet, and is vaguely programmatic. Its form is that of the double variation: ABABA. On the score of the A section Beethoven has inscribed the words that give opus 132 its subtitle "Heiliger Dankgesang . . . - Hymn of Thanksgiving offered to the Divinity by a convalescent, in the Lydian mode"; where the B section begins he adds: "Feeling new strength." The two inner B sections begin as a stately though mannered dance, gradually yielding to an impassioned lyricism. The first A section contains a five phrase hymn in long undifferentiated half notes, each one introduced by a two measure polyphonic preface in even quarter notes. In the second statement (the first variation) of A, the hymn is played through, but only by the first violin, while the polyphonic preface, invading the entire section and becoming the prevailing texture of the lower parts, proceeds in faster quarter and eighth notes. In the closing variation of A only the first of the five hymn stanzas remains (though it recurs many times) while the polyphonic preface is even more elaborate and dominant and now moves in syncopated and still faster sixteenth notes. Dare one say that the music depicts Beethoven's recovery by increased pace, movement and density? This last A section, to which Beethoven inscribes on each of the four string parts the words "with deepest feeling" and which should begin just as softly as possible, also contains the astounding climax of the movement with its strident dissonances and tenaciously held dynamic accents. The Lydian mode (the F to F white piano notes) that Beethoven employses in the A sections has nothing in common with the medieval practice out of which it might seem to derive. Rather, Beethoven accepts it willingly as a restraint upon his creative freedom; for aside from the cadences he allows

himself not a single altered chromatic tone, not a single sharp or flat accidental, and thereby he avoids the kind of chords and progressions that give his harmony its usual drive and direction. The result is an otherworldly harmony, a state of suspended animation that alternates with the cloudless D major tonality of the B sections. Yet even the Lydian mode almost imperceptibly yields to C major about half way through the A sections suggesting perhaps the reconciliation that is at the expressive heart of "Heiliger Dankgesang".

What a change from the complexity and length of the Adagio to the terse regularity of the fourth movement, the *Alla Marcia*. The movement recalls Beethoven's many marches and in particular the very different martial music in the last movements of the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony, the two great works that immediately precede the last quartets. But there are other references in our quartet to the Ninth Symphony. The *Più Allegro* section that ends this quartet movement and introduces the *Allegro appassionato* is an instrumental recitative that quotes from an identical section of the Symphony; and the *Allegro appassionato* appears in the D minor key of the Ninth Symphony in the Symphony sketchbook, suggesting that it was first conceived as a possible symphonic finale.

Of all the movements of opus 132, the *Allegro appassionato* least requires explanatory comment. It is cast in the clearly perceptible form of the rondo-sonata: RARBRA<sup>1</sup>R. The alternation of the rondo is one of recurrence or refrain (R), versus novelty or verse (A and B); the sonata may be expressed loosely by exposition (RAR), development (B) and reprise (RA<sup>1</sup>R). This movement too has some lovely touches, for example, the initial rolling suspensions in the second violin and cello and the syncopations of the viola that accompany the violin theme. But no clearer account is to be found of Beethoven's mature view of the difference between a first movement and a finale than by comparing these movements in opus 132. The first movement has all kinds of motivic discontinuities; in the finale we speak of themes rather than fragmentary motives and thematic contrasts are held to a minimum. The first movement is sparked by harmonic detours, unsettling changes of pace and uncertain tonality; the finale never loses its harmonic direction nor the dominance of the A tonality and the only slackening of pace occurs in the four measures that prepare for the coda and the final turn from A minor to the more conclusive major tonality. The first movement is hesitant and troubled; the finale is fluent and affirmative. Put perhaps in too simple terms, it is the path from problem to solution.

Harvey Olnick

#### The "Grosse Fuge" in B flat major, opus 133

please see under: Quartet No. 13 in B flat major, opus 130

#### Quartet No. 16, in F major, opus 135 (1826)

Allegretto

Vivace

Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo

Grave ma non troppo tratto - Allegro

Beethoven's quartet in F, opus 135, occupies a very special and curious place in Beethoven's output. By the middle of his last summer, Beethoven had completed the quartets opp. 132, 130 (with the *Grosse Fuge*, later op. 133, as finale), and 131. These works have a remarkable consistency encompassing shared themes as well as stylistic norms. They inhabit a world unto themselves — a world in which op. 135, written only months later, does not fit. Next to their daring harmonies and forms, and their violent contrasts between the popular and the pedantic, the miniature and the immense, op. 135 seems a throwback: a work at ease with its good humour and



its four-movement form. One is tempted (against one's will!) to think of matters psychological and cosmic: if opp. 132, 130, and 131 are "old man's music", like Verdi's *Otello* and Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, then op. 135 is "very old man's music", like Verdi's *Falstaff* — and Bach died before he was "very old"!

Many of Beethoven's hallmarks can be found in the first movement, such as forceful punctuation by the use of unisons or open octaves, silence, and sudden shifts of dynamic level. There is also a great variety of *pace*: the speed of the beats (the *tempo*) never changes in this movement, but one striking theme, introduced very early (in open octaves), moves steadily at only one note to the moderate beat, while others move at two, four, and even six notes to the beat. Late in the Exposition (and correspondingly in the Recapitulation) Beethoven even presents one series of sliding chords first at *four* notes per beat, then immediately varies it at *six* per beat. This relaxed attitude towards ornamental variation also operates at long range: the slow "theme" mentioned above returns in the Recapitulation ornamented, with twice as many notes. And Beethoven takes the trouble to show us that he can *combine* the movement's opening "question" with the slow theme (in the Development) and also with its ornamentation (Recapitulation and Coda).

The texture of this movement is unusually active, even for Beethoven, and the few moments when the first violin has a melody simply accompanied by the other three instruments stand out in sharp-relief.

Finally, this movement introduces a great wealth of material, most of it apparently "new" but all of it following with great aural "logic" — and some of it actually "explained" later in the movement, like the slow theme that turns out to be a countersubject to the viola's initial "question" motif. The elegant and witty use of the violins' "answer" to the viola's "question" to end the Exposition and the Recapitulation (inconclusively) and the Coda (conclusively) is a lesson Beethoven learned well from Joseph Haydn, who carried it to a never-exceeded level in his quartet op. 33, no. 5.

The second movement, a scherzo-trio-scherzo, is a delightfully syncopated display of *multiple counterpoint*: by designing the various instrumental lines so that any one of them can be the top, middle, or bottom line, Beethoven can achieve great variety between sections of the scherzo without presenting anything really new.

In fact, the melodic material in this scherzo is itself so restricted in range and tonal motion that the centre of attention naturally shifts to the offbeat rhythms, the kaleidoscopic effect of the multiple-counterpoint "rotations", and the "seams" between the predominantly eight-bar sections. After two eight-bar blocks, Beethoven jars us with the first seam — an accented "wrong-note" e-flat in all four instruments, reiterated in a foreign metre, and sliding up through e-natural to the tonic f, where the eight-bar block returns in two different "rotations": first an especially unstable one, then the most tuneful of all, with the widest-ranging line — originally the base — high in the first violin. After a longish treatment of the three-note closing "tag", the ominous e-flats bring back this section, which then leads into the Trio, based on rising scales and turns, and wandering tonally from F to G to A major, a rather distant key. Beethoven returns by taking advantage of the fact that the original tune (in the key of F) began on the *note A*, which forms an easy and witty link between these two keys. The note *A* serves as a kind of beacon through the fog of this retransition to F major and the Scherzo's return.

The third movement is an elided set of variations, "quite slow, singing and tranquil". It is, conventionally, the only movement *not* in F major (it is in D-flat major, a chord with the note *F* in the middle), and Beethoven takes the trouble to link it with that tonality by having the viola enter alone with the note F, then adding the other instruments, one at a time, with the other notes of the D-flat chord. (One is immediately reminded of the similar "link" at the corresponding place in the Ninth Symphony.)

Beethoven presents his sublime theme and four variations, the second of which forms the "centrepiece" of the movement, set off by its lower tempo and minor mode. The third variation restores the theme's mode, tempo, and melody, but gives the melody to the 'cello, while the first violin follows one measure behind. The melody is so designed that this imitation produces a wave-like series of expansions and contractions ("contrary motion") that can be taken as a kind of metaphor for quiet breathing.

The score of the finale begins with a celebrated bit of marginalia, of the sort that would soon grace many of Robert Schumann's compositions: under the heading *Der schwer gefasste Entschluss* (the difficult resolution), Beethoven writes out the viola-cello melodic "question" from the *Grave* introduction, and the musical "answer" played by the upper strings in the ensuing *Allegro*. Under the question (now *without* quotation marks!) he sets the words "*Muss es sein?*" (Must it be?); under the answers, "*Es muss sein! Es muss sein!*" (It must be!).

While several writers have laboured to attach morbid autobiographical significance to this tidbit, it seems to have been prompted — along with a silly canon on the same musical fragment earlier in 1826 — by nothing more morbid than the exclamation of a certain Ignaz Dembscher on resigning himself to the outlay of fifty florins! At any rate, the movement seems to bear no trace of the miserable state of Beethoven's personal life, to the amazement of those who search titanic music for the autobiography of a jealous and paranoid old man.

The movement is relatively straightforward, although the wilfully shocking introduction seems especially abrupt after the care the composer took to lead smoothly into the variation movement. This *Grave* introduction, like that of the "Pathétique" sonata, returns later in the movement. Here the return comes at the end of the Development, and the return is even more elaborate than the initial appearance. After the now-furious "*Muss es sein?*" outbursts from viola and cello have faded to the poignant chord that ended the first appearance, there is an extension in which the question in the lower strings and the answer in the violins are superimposed. Immediately the *Allegro* returns and carries through to the end with only a hint of the (mock) seriousness of the introduction.

Norman Rubin



## Orford String Quartet

Andrew Dawes, violin  
Kenneth Perkins, violin

Terence Helmer, viola  
Marcel St-Cyr, cello

In 1965 four young musicians from Western Canada, Ontario and Quebec met at Mount Orford, the summer camp of Les Jeunesses Musicales. Encouraged by Professor Lorand Fenyves and assisted by the Canada Council, they formed the Orford String Quartet. Since then, this ensemble of growing international reputation has given concerts throughout Canada and the United States, toured widely in Europe and Russia and performed at international festivals in Italy, Spain, Germany and Puerto Rico. Since 1968 the group has been the Quartet-in-Residence of the University of Toronto. In 1974 the Quartet won the first prize in the European Broadcasting Union's String Quartet Competition in Stockholm, Sweden. They have made recordings for RCA, Concert Hall, CBC and Ace of Diamonds; recently they signed a contract with London Records.

**Andrew Dawes**, a native of Western Canada, studied under Clayton Hare, Murray Adaskin and under Lorand Fenyves at the Geneva Conservatory in Switzerland where he won the Prix de Virtuosit . He has also performed as a soloist in recitals and with orchestras in Canada, the United States, Switzerland and Yugoslavia.

**Kenneth Perkins**, also a Westerner, began music study at the age of seven, spent three years in New York under Ivan Galamian and subsequently went to Geneva where he was in Lorand Fenyves' class with Andrew Dawes. Mr. Perkins gave his first concert when he was sixteen, was a member of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the McGill Chamber Orchestra and has taught at McGill University. He has also appeared as a soloist in Canada, Italy and Switzerland.

**Terence Helmer**, from Kirkland Lake, Ontario, studied under Geza de Kresz, Kathleen Parlow, Joseph Gingold and Arthur Grumiaux. He has a degree from the University of Indiana and a dipl me sup rieur from the Brussels Royal Conservatory. Mr. Helmer was a member of the Stratford Festival Orchestra, the Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Hart House Orchestra and the Brussels Chamber Orchestra. Although he still gives occasional solo recitals, his avowed preference is for chamber music.

**Marcel St-Cyr**, a native of Quebec City, studied at its Conservatoire de Musique under Lucien Plamondon, then under Walter Joachim and graduated with a first prize in cello. Subsequently he studied under Andre Navarra, under Leo Koscieln  in Germany, and also in Italy and Australia. M. St-Cyr has appeared as a soloist with the Quebec City Symphony Orchestra, the CBC Quebec Orchestra, on radio and television and once was a choirmaster at Laval University.

